



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION LIMITED
HELD AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, LONDON,
ON WEDNESDAY 7TH OCTOBER 2009**

Present:	Sally Bugden	Chairman
	Andrew Petrie	Vice Chairman & Tournament Committee Chairman
	Mike Hill	Treasurer
	Barry Capal	General Manager
	John Carter	Board Member
	Graham Jepson	Board Member
	Jeff Morris	Board Member & Manchester Proxy Shareholder
	Alan Nelson	Board Member
	Malcolm Oliver	Board Member
	Martin Pool	Board Member
	Peter Stocken	Board Member
	Heather Dhondy	Selection Committee Chairman
	Jeremy Dhondy	Laws & Ethics Committee Chairman
(apologies)	Gerard Faulkner	Vice President & Norfolk Shareholder
	Tony Parks	Auditor
	Max Bavin	Tournament Manager
	Sandra Claridge	Minute Taker
	Karen Durrell	Reception
	Elena Jeronimidis	Editor, <i>English Bridge</i>

County	Shareholders: Present	Apologies	Proxy	County	Shareholders: Present	Apologies	Proxy
Avon		Mrs M Harris	P Green	Mersey/Cheshire	G Endicott		
Bedfordshire		Mrs V Lawson	R Chester		A Clark		
Berks & Bucks	T Garrett			Middlesex	KA Drane	Mrs J Feldman	PN Rosen
	N Thompson				PN Rosen		
Cambs & Hunts	P Bond	C Jagger	P Bond		R Amey		
Channel Islands	Mrs P Panter			Norfolk		JG Faulkner	R Amey
Cornwall	J Booth					J McCourt	I Rankin
Cumbria		G Bell	D Strawbridge	North East			
Derbyshire		T Treeby	J Booth	Northants	Mrs J Burgess		
Devon				Notts		K Rodgers	
Dorset	R Heath					P Baxter	Mrs S Nicholson
Essex	Mrs M Curtis	I Moss	Mrs M Curtis	Oxford	Mrs B Harris	Mrs S Maxwell	Mrs B Harris
	R Green						
Gloucestershire	Mrs P Pearce			Somerset	Mrs R Brown		
Hants & IoW	K Palmer	Mrs M Gale	A Jenkins				
	A Jenkins			Staffs & Shrops	PD Hackett	J Withers	PD Hackett
Herefordshire	R Underhill	G Harrington	R Underhill				
				Suffolk	MR Carey		
Hertfordshire	BN Eddleston			Surrey	PB Bentley		
	M Hancock				MR Curtis		
	MW Minting				Mrs M Griffin	H Marsen	MR Curtis
Isle of Man	Dr EF Slatcher			Sussex	PJ Bates		
Kent	BR Crack				ER Buddery		
	JM Lewis				Miss J Simpson		
Lancashire	J Brelsford	Mrs J Wright	J Brelsford	Warwicks	C Lang		
					J Pyner		
Leicestershire	RH Northage				L Reece		
	J Wilcox			Westmorland			
Lincolnshire				Wiltshire	P Green		
London	Mrs C Duckworth			Worcester		Mrs JA Skelton	N Forward
	S Cochemè					P Hammond	
	JR Smith			Yorkshire	PG Mason		
Manchester	Mrs K Nelson				Mrs L Millet		
		M Newman			IR Rodger		
	S Travers					Mrs J Latham	P Mason

Opening the meeting the Chairman congratulated the Seniors team comprising Ross Harper, Paul Hackett, David Price, Colin Simpson, Gunnar Hallberg, John Holland and their NPC Peter Baxter on winning the D’Orsi Seniors Bowl at the recent World Championships, and thanked Ross Harper for the financial support he has given to the team. Their gold medal completes an extremely successful year for English international teams.

On a sad note, Sally reported the recent deaths of Peter Czerniewski, who as an international player had been a great asset to the EBU, Roy Absalom, an EBU Vice-President, and Freddie North, a bridge teacher and writer of great renown. Condolences were expressed to all their families.

1 Apologies for absence

See Page 1 for County information.

2 Announcement of Dimmie Fleming Award

The Chairman announced that a Dimmie Fleming Award would be presented locally to Bob Blackmore, for his outstanding contribution in terms of directing and mentoring at Exeter Bridge Club. Bob had also been the recipient of the 2009 John Armstrong Award, which had been presented at the Brighton Summer Meeting.

Noting that only one Dimmie Fleming Award had been made this year, the Chairman reminded counties that it was in their gift to nominate anyone who had given great service to their county on a voluntary basis.

3 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 2nd October 2008

The minutes were a matter of note, having been formally accepted at the Shareholders’ Meeting on 11th March 2009.

4 Minutes of the Shareholders’ Meeting on 3rd June 2009

The minutes were signed as a true record, subject to line 2 of the last paragraph of page 2 being amended to read “Angus Clark, Margaret Eddleston...”

Matters Arising

4.1 Charity Registration Timetable

The Chairman said that a meeting had been held with the Solicitors dealing with the application. The Board had not yet received a report from the meeting, and due to the EBU being a new type of organisation it was likely that the registration will be delayed. Shareholders would be kept up-to-date on progress.

4.2 County Chairmans’ Meeting

The Chairman said that County Chairmen would be contacted within the next couple of weeks, and that the likely date for the meeting was either 16th or 23rd February 2010.

5 Chairman’s Annual Report for the year 2008/2009

I have reported on our business activities and updated our strategy plan at the last meeting of the Shareholders in June and, as promised, to the membership in the August issue of English Bridge. Those activities aside, I would like to concentrate on three areas that have defined my first year as Chairman – international success on the world stage, national parliamentary activity and the continuing challenge of change.

International Success

For the first time in many years, we have had supreme success in world international events, with our Women winning Gold at the World Mind Sports Olympics in Beijing October 2008, our Under 21s and Open teams winning Silver at the same event and our Seniors winning the 39th World Bridge Championships D’Orsi Seniors Bowl for the first time in England’s history. Congratulations to all the players, coaches, captains and squad managers who helped us achieve this global greatness. And congratulations to our Selection Committee and our Youth Committee who identified those who should take part.

However, what this also demonstrated was that there is no interest in international bridge success at national media level. We are indebted to James Mates who, single handed, promoted us on News at Ten. But we have an enormous task ahead of us - we have to identify ways, means and personalities that will appeal to all levels of media.

National Parliamentary Activity

Something that may help us achieve part of this aim is that for the first time ever, duplicate bridge has a presence at national parliamentary level. We chose to highlight the benefits that learning duplicate bridge can bring to society through helping young people learn maths, logic, working in partnership and teams and through helping older people retain good brain health through the rigour of a mental workout whilst socialising – something that has a huge bearing on fighting dementia and maintaining a healthy outlook. This has introduced us to some notable champions of duplicate bridge including Baroness Ruth Henig who was the driving force in setting up our All Party Parliamentary Group for the development of duplicate bridge and Ron Millet, an EBU member from Leeds, who has done some sterling work to identify funding for some robust research on bridge and its effects on dementia.

The continuing challenge of change

Our work to deliver universal membership for the Union has continued unabated.

We have moved forward to ensure that our organisation can shake off the shackles of the past and make itself fit for purpose within its new philosophy of being accessible to and representative of all duplicate bridge players. We have had to work incredibly hard to ensure that our message of support and development for clubs is heard at every possible opportunity. We do not have vast amounts of money to spend on a national advertising campaign; we are dependent on our publications, our website and our individual communications with clubs. It is imperative; therefore, that all our shareholders help us by ensuring that the correct information is given to their affiliated clubs and members and work with us to make sure that this democratically decided policy is delivered for the benefit of all.

I would like to express the EBU’s gratitude to the following for their financial support in the past year:

Milton Damerall Trust

Baker Tilly

Bridge Overseas

Helen Schapiro

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those individuals who have made contributions to the EBU Youth and Education Trust.

I thanked our national volunteers publicly in both the August and October issues of *English Bridge* but there are individuals who I would personally like to thank now...

David Harris, for the work that he has done for us during this past year, which has been above and beyond the call of duty.

Stephen Barnfield and Richard Fleet who have helped the Board determine policy to regulate various areas of our activities.

Heather Dhondy for her work with the Selection Committee, making it efficient and coherent under her Chairmanship

Jeremy Dhondy for his Chairmanship of the Laws and Ethics Committee, addressing the needs of clubs in this time of change.

Suzanne Gill for her advice and assistance with the five year plan for education.

John Carter for setting up the NGS group and leading and developing that project, communicating its progress clearly and concisely to all members.

Michael Hill for being an integral part of our business planning process, for re-structuring our overhead and management charge allocation, for continuing to work with all committee chairmen on the 5 year plan as well as guiding our excellent accounts manager Gail Nancarrow in the daily financial management of the Union.

Graham Jepson for chairing our new national club committee offering guidance and support to all its members.

Jeff Morris for his contribution to the youth committee and representing us at the CCPR and Mind Sports Council.

Alan Nelson for his membership of the Tournament Committee and providing us with strategic guidance and insight.

Malcolm Oliver - a key member of our business planning team, with, amongst other things, responsibilities for the Shop. He stepped up and took over the Chairmanship of the Youth Committee in March of this year and has made some insightful and informed contributions on the future of this area of our activities. He also represents our interests at Bridge Great Britain.

Andrew Petrie, who, as Chairman of the Tournament Committee has addressed the tournament programme, master points and licensing in the age of universal membership and who as Vice Chairman has made huge contributions on corporate governance and charity registration and is a key member of the business planning team.

Martin Pool's sterling contributions include his vice chairmanship of the Laws and Ethics Committee, his advice, assistance and guidance on all matters to do with county and club constitutions as well as his presence on the charity registration working group and the TD Assessment panel.

Peter Stocken for chairing the TD Assessment panel and providing knowledge, insight and constant good humour at our meetings

And finally, I would like to thank Barry Capal and the team at Aylesbury, who have supported this Board in its efforts to bring the EBU in to the 21st Century and who have truly grasped the challenge of change.

6 Hon. Treasurer's Annual Report for the year 2008/9

The report was noted. The Treasurer said that he had nothing to add but would be happy to answer questions.

Asked by Grattan Endicott what proportion of the Company's fixed assets of £457K was represented by the value of the Aylesbury premises, the Treasurer said approximately 80% (for the premises alone - i.e. excluding the land and fixtures/fittings).

In answer to a question from David Strawbridge on an apparent reduction in the cost of meetings, the Treasurer said that the figures reflected more accurate apportionment of expenses to particular operations. David Strawbridge also expressed the view that it was difficult for Shareholders to grasp the cost of running the Union on an annual basis and referred to previous figures of over £700K. In response the Treasurer said that the new presentation of costs had been designed to make the whole thing more comprehensible for everyone and, for the year to 31st March 2009 the unallocated overhead was £423K.

Noting a significant increase in salaries, Grattan Endicott asked where the reported savings in administration costs as a result of Pay to Play would be achieved. Barry Capal said that administration costs would be reduced from 1st April 2010, i.e. after the introduction of Pay to Play.

In response to a question on how much was spent on developing bridge, Peter Stocken said that it was impossible to quantify, given that all the Union's activities are devoted to the development of the game.

7 Directors' Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2009

The report was approved and the annual accounts to 31st March formally adopted nem con.

8 Re-appointment of Auditors for the year 2009/10

A proposal from the Chair that AD Parks & Co. be re-appointed was carried nem con. The Treasurer thanked Tony Parks for his contribution over a number of years.

9 Universal Membership

The Chairman said that there had been very little change to the figures published on 4th September, with only one negative response, and that the status and forecast were improving. Reminder letters had been despatched to clubs who had not responded, and updated details on all aspects of the scheme would be provided to counties.

Sidney Travers (Manchester) said that controversy, disarray and acrimony were still evident in some areas, and that the Board must do everything possible to ensure that established clubs are accommodated rather than distanced as a result of the introduction of Pay to Play.

In response, the Chairman was joined by Brian Crack in urging counties to make the scheme work, as it is in their interest to do so, by persuading clubs that it is worthwhile to remain within the Union's jurisdiction and protection. It was time to move forward with the core group of clubs who are affiliating, and build on the benefits already in place in terms of teaching, TD courses, regulations etc. Any assumption that the Union does not care about all its clubs and bridge players was misguided, and those clubs that choose not to affiliate would be contacted and encouraged to return. The Chairman pointed out that in 2005 the Shareholders asked the Board to address the falling membership numbers, and that it is what they have done. To date 60% of clubs have signed up to the scheme, representing a membership of 40,000 compared to the 23,000 full members that we have at the moment.

Malcolm Curtis (Surrey) said that there were worrying aspects of the scheme. In particular, the EBU, as the only bridge organisation in England, will shortly be losing one-third of its constituency, and £100K of its annual income. This concern was shared by others who pointed out that additional clubs could opt out after one year of Pay to Play, which would necessitate an increase in the Pay to Play fee. Some costs have risen, and with income from licensed holidays and advertising likely to decrease, there could be a substantial financial downturn. In response, the Treasurer reminded everyone that there were ongoing cost savings associated with Pay to Play. The losses forecast for the current year and 2010-11, together totalling just over £100k, were actually slightly less than the total implementation costs of the project and, even allowing for the cash-flow timing issues associated with Pay to Play, the Pay to Play figure of 29p was still appropriate for 2010-11. The 5-year plan had taken into account the expected impact of the recession and had used a very pessimistic assumption about likely net rates of re-affiliation.

Alan Nelson pointed out that retaining 60% of existing clubs would result in a significant increase in membership, and that the process for current members of clubs who choose to disaffiliate to join as direct members would be strongly publicised. The experience of other countries who had adopted the scheme was that in general there had been a take-up of around 60%, but that over a 2-3 period, at least half of clubs who had disaffiliated had returned to the fold.

The Chairman confirmed that non-affiliated clubs would have no benefits in terms of website access or the ability to receive membership discounts at the Bridge Shop - the practice of members' discount being passed to non-affiliated clubs would cease. The Board recognised that new members should be attracted, and every effort would be made to assist clubs and teachers to recruit students.

Ron Heath (Dorset) reported that only 3 of 13 clubs in his county had agreed to affiliate and that if the position didn't improve, the county's future would be in doubt. The Chairman agreed that to discuss the matter with Dorset.

Closing the debate Malcolm Carey (Suffolk) said that there had been a steady decline in membership and that for the EBU to survive everyone must support the Board, and do their utmost to make the scheme successful.

10 Bye-Law changes Resolution

At the June 2008 General Meeting of the English Bridge Union Limited, the Members approved the following Resolution:

'that the Shareholders accept the principle of Universal Membership and approve the Board proposals for replacing the current Annual Subscription and Master Point income by a pay to play fee as outlined in the "Final Proposal Document" dated April 2008. If so approved the Board will commission the changes necessary to the Bye-Laws of the English Bridge Union and request a future General Meeting to accept those changes'.

In accordance with the powers vested in it under section 20.1 of the Articles of Association of the English Bridge Union Limited the following Ordinary Resolution was put by the Company to the Members, and carried nem con:

'Following the adoption of the resolution (quoted above) from the June 2008 General Meeting, the Members hereby approve the Bye-Law changes as notified to them with the papers for the October 2009 Annual General Meeting and as will be appended to the minutes of this General Meeting'.

11 Election of Directors for the year 2009/2010

Twelve candidates had been duly nominated, and the outcome of the vote was as follows:

Elected:

Sally Bugden 71, John Carter 53, Jeremy Dhondy 59, Michael Hill 65, Graham Jepson 64, Jeff Morris 55, Alan Nelson 54, Malcolm Oliver 55, Andrew Petrie 69, Martin Pool 58.

Not elected:

Suzanne Gill 40, Peter Stocken 46.

The Chairman welcomed Jeremy Dhondy to the Board, and Philip Mason thanked Peter Stocken for his invaluable contribution over a number of years. Peter would now revert to being a Vice-President of the Union.

12 Election of Chairman for the year 2009/2010

Sally Bugden, having been duly nominated, was formally appointed for the year 2009/10.

Peter Stocken paid tribute to Sally's commitment and dedication during the past year.

13 Election of Vice-Chairman for the year 2009/2010

Andrew Petrie, having been duly nominated, was formally appointed for the year 2009/10.

14 Election of Hon. Treasurer for the year 2009/2010

Michael Hill, having been duly nominated, was formally appointed for the year 2009/10.

15 Appointment of Company Secretary for the year 2009/2010

Barry Capal was formally appointed for the year 2009/10.

16 Election of 2 members to the Laws & Ethics Committee for the year 2009/2010

Two nominations had been received for two positions. Mike Amos and Jeremy Dhondy were re-elected for a further three-year term of office expiring in 2012.

17 Election of 2 members of the Tournament Committee for the year 2009/2010

Two nominations had been received for two positions. Alan Nelson and Addis Page were re-elected for a further three-year term of office expiring in 2012.

18 Election of 2 members of the Selection Committee for the year 2009/2010

Four nominations had been received for two positions. The following were elected for a three-year term of office expiring in 2012:

Sally Brock (57 votes) and Peter Baxter (39 votes).

Not elected:

Heather Bakhshi (24 votes), David Muller (25 votes).

19 Hon. Treasurer's Report for the year to date

Michael Hill reported that performance was a little below budget, but that he had no particular concerns. The Bridge Shop figures were improving, but were not likely to achieve budget.

20 Membership subscriptions for the year 2010/2011

The rates for the year were confirmed as follows:

<i>Pay to Play</i>	29p
<i>Direct members:</i>	
UK	£23.00
Overseas	£25.00
<i>EBUTA members:</i>	
Existing or new members joining before 31/10/10	£15.00
Joining between 1/11/10 and 31/3/11	£ 7.50
<i>Junior members:</i>	
Over 17 and under 22 on 1/1/10	N/A
Under 17 years old on 1/1/10	N/A

Affiliations:

Club (via County)	£30.00
Club (Direct)	£30.00
University	£ 5.00
Schools	£ 0.00

Asked by Bernard Eddleston (Herts.) why the Direct membership subscription had been decreased, the Treasurer explained that in future anyone not wishing to join through a club would join as a Direct member, and would be required to join a County association. The figure of £23 represented an increase on the current ordinary subscription, and a decrease on the existing Direct subscription.

Martin Pool confirmed that all County Constitutions would be examined to ensure that all clubs affiliating to a county were also affiliated to the EBU.

A proposal from the Chair that the rates be approved en bloc was carried nem con.

21 Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors

4.1 11th May 2009

Robert Northage requested clarification of the first sentence of page 5 of the minutes. The Chairman drew to his attention the recently published definition of a club.

4.2 7th July 2009

Margaret Curtis (Essex) reported that there was little interest in the National Grading Scheme in her county. Clubs had their own ladder scheme, and she suggested that the existing Master Point Scheme could be extended to provide monthly results. The Chairman said that John Carter would be undertaking consultation on the Scheme in the near future, but in any event the Scheme was unlikely to be implemented before 2011.

Sandra Nicholson (Oxon) sought clarification on whether a County duplicate evening would be required to carry a Pay to Play fee. Shareholders from Gloucestershire and the Isle of Man both reported that their counties held similar events, and given that they attracted the counties' better players, they had opted to charge a Pay to Play fee. Whilst there was general agreement that such events should carry a Pay to Play fee, the Vice-Chairman said that the Board would stick to its original commitment i.e. that imposing a Pay to Play charge would be optional for counties.

4.3 19th August 2009

The Vice-Chairman confirmed that the Children In Need Simultaneous Pairs events would be open to both affiliated and non-affiliated clubs.

22 Minutes of the meetings of the Laws & Ethics Committee of 5th June & 4th September

Presenting the minutes Jeremy Dhondy said that a draft of the "Tangerine Book" had been provided to the Club Committee, and that any points raised would be considered at the next meeting in January, the full document being published on the website in February. The "White Book" aimed at Tournament Directors and Appeals Chairman was now seriously out-of-date due to changes in regulation and amendments to the Laws, and a revised edition would be available electronically in April 2010. Robert Northage (Leics.) requested that printed copies be made available, and charged for. In response, Jeremy said that a printed copy had been considered, but with regular changes it was not considered viable. However, a list of changes in respect of all documents would be publicised.

The Committee had received a number of allegations of unacceptable behaviour in clubs, and noted that in some cases the clubs had no defined disciplinary procedures, and had dealt with the matter inappropriately.

Jeremy said that as a general principle a club having a difficulty with a disciplinary matter should first seek the help of the County, and that referral to the L&E should be a last resort. However, assistance would not be provided to any non-affiliated club. Jeremy confirmed that a club was under no obligation to disclose to its county association the results of any disciplinary action, but that where penalties had been imposed by the Laws & Ethics Committee, the relevant clubs and counties would be informed. It was stressed that all county and club constitutions should contain approved disciplinary procedures, and that model constitutions were available.

23 Minutes of the meetings of the Selection Committee on 23rd August

Heather Dhondy presented the minutes, and said that in view of declining entries to both the National Women's Teams and the Lady Milne Trials, a decision had been taken to offer the winners of the Whitelaw Cup from 2010 onwards the opportunity to represent England in the Lady Milne Trophy, which it was hoped would revive interest in both events. The Tournament Committee had agreed to find a more suitable date for the National Women's Teams.

Kath Nelson (Manchester) noted that this would be a change from what is currently a pairs trial. In response Heather said that all other trials i.e. Open and Senior were now teams-based, but that formats of trials would be under constant review.

24 Dates for Shareholders' meetings for the year 2009/2010

<i>Tuesday 9th March</i>	Shareholders' Meeting – Imperial Hotel, London
<i>Thursday 1st July</i>	Shareholders' Meeting – Imperial Hotel, London
<i>Wednesday 6th October</i>	Annual General Meeting – Imperial Hotel, London

25 Any other business

Elena Jeronimidis, Editor of *English Bridge* said that to continue producing articles on interesting people in the bridge world, she needed information on anyone who could be highlighted. Such could include someone with an interesting or unusual job, hobby, achievement etc.

The Cumbrian shareholder expressed disappointment that the implementation of Pay to Play had meant that all counties had been compelled to join the scheme. In response the Chairman said that the benefits of the scheme included streamlining of the organisation to provide savings, simplification for clubs in terms of electronic registration, free teacher training, and a club teacher programme offering advice on recruitment. Everything was aimed at the development of bridge and promotion of the game, and had been formulated on research and consultation. It only remained for the Board and the counties to continue to work on communication to eradicate any lack of understanding and recognition of what the EBU is seeking to achieve.

Closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Shareholders for their attendance at what had been a very productive meeting.

**Date of the Next Meeting is Tuesday 9th March
in the Tudor Room at the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square
Start 12.30pm**